

My Free Catechism

Book Two: The Sacraments

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Given this 16th day of September, 2020 at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown.



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This catechism is intended as a supplementary learning material for children in the upper grades, but is substantial enough to be usable also by young adults and the general public. It also aims to serve as a free resource for many average Catholics who need to learn or review what the Catholic faith teaches, but who have no time nor endurance to read the voluminous and theologically precise *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

This catechism is divided into four books; namely, Book One: *The Apostle's Creed*, Book Two: *The Sacraments*, Book Three: *The Commandments*, and Book Four: *Prayer and Christian Perfection*. The books are available in the form of pdf files that may be copied, shared, printed on paper or uploaded to children's mobile devices, iPods or computer tablets.

I did not write this catechism from scratch. To save time I made use of the questions and answers from old catechisms in the public domain, particularly the *Catechism of St. Pius X*. However, I edited, expanded and updated many of the texts to reflect current Church teachings. Color texts and illustrations, which are missing in old catechisms, were added to make the book attractive to young readers.

Many of the pictures used here are also in the public domain here in the U.S., but there are a few copyrighted ones that I took the liberty of using based on the concept of "fair use," as defined by Title 17, U.S. Code §107, for educational and non-commercial purposes. Picture credits and a link to their sources and license (when available) are given at the end of the book.

External references in the texts, such as references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) or to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* (CIC), are added mainly for the use of parents or teachers who are coaching the children in learning this catechism. However, it is hoped that through the reading of select paragraphs of the CCC, many will be encouraged to read the entire book and profit from its wealth of wisdom.

Biblical texts used in this catechism are mostly from the *Douay-Challoner Rheims* version which, because they are in the public domain, I have edited slightly just to make the English less archaic for contemporary readers. The final texts may be compared with the original text of the *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version (link below).

Although I made this book as a lay Dominican, this book is my personal project and not the project of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Therefore, the ideas expressed are mine alone and do not represent the endorsement or position of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic or the Order of Preachers as a whole.

USEFUL LINKS

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>

1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC – comes from the Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism

<https://archive.org/details/AnecdotesAndExamplesIllustrating/page/n5/mode/2up>

Douay-Challoner-Rheims Bible (public domain)

<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>

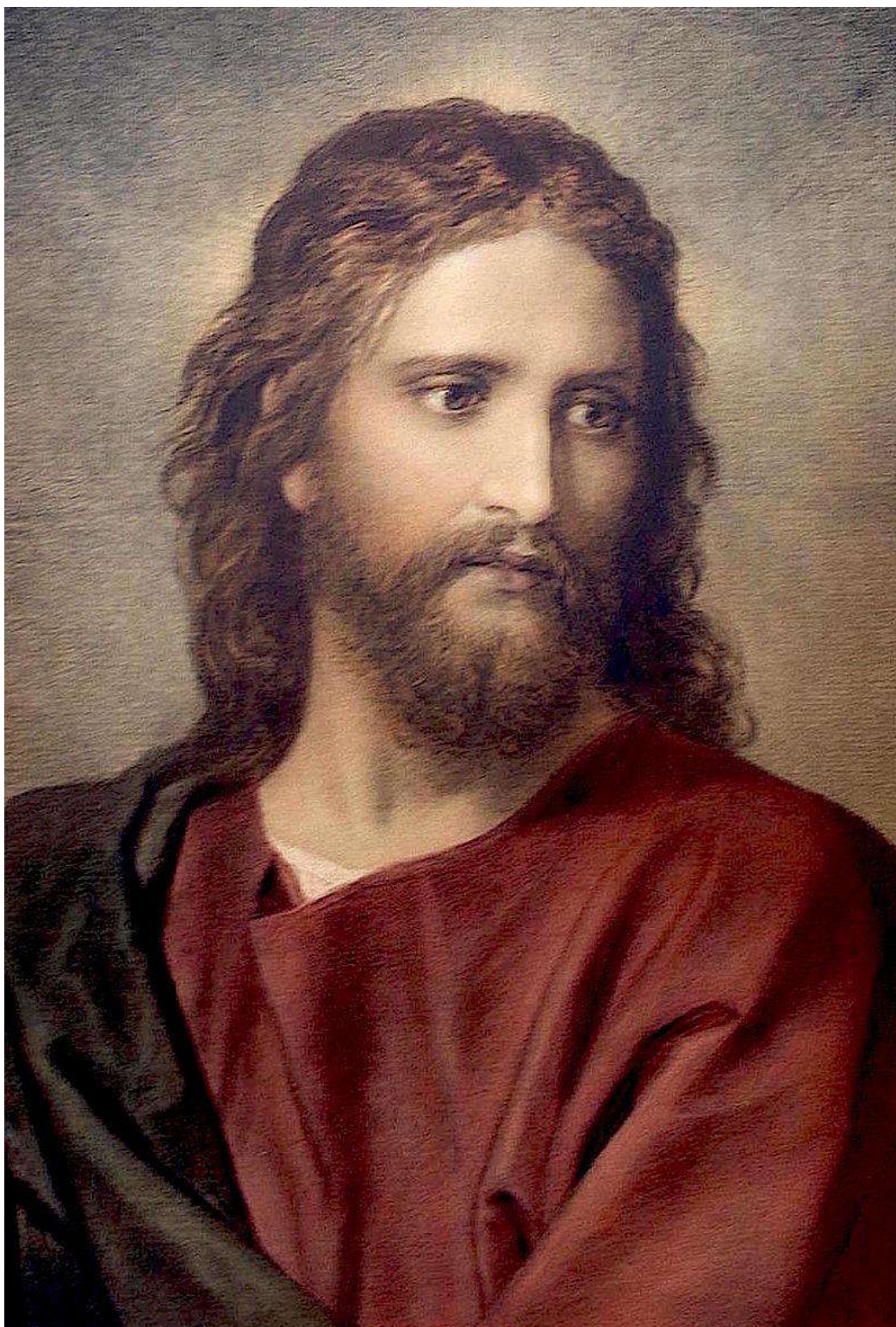


Fig 2 Portrait of Jesus Christ
Extracted from the Painting “Christ and the Rich Young Ruler”
By Heinrich Hofmann (1824-1911)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Click the Title to go directly to each Topic.)

The Sacraments

Lesson 1 Baptism

Lesson 2 Confirmation

Lesson 3 Holy Eucharist

Lesson 4 Reconciliation

Lesson 5 Anointing of the Sick

Lesson 6 Holy Orders

Lesson 7 Matrimony

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PART 2 THE SACRAMENTS

NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. What is treated of in the second part of this catechism?

The second part of this catechism (Book Two) treats of the sacraments.

2. What is meant by the word “sacrament”?

By the word “sacrament” is meant a sensible and efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ to sanctify our souls. (CCC 1114)

3. Why do you call the sacraments sensible and efficacious signs of grace?

The sacraments are called sensible and efficacious signs of grace because they signify by means of sensible things, the divine grace which they produce in our souls. In Baptism, for example, the pouring of water on the head of the person, and the words, “I baptize thee,” that means, I wash thee, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” are a sensible sign of that which Baptism accomplishes in the soul. Just as water washes the body, so in like manner does the grace given in Baptism cleanse the soul from sin.

4. How many sacraments are there, and what are they called?

There are seven sacraments; namely (CCC 1113):

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist
4. Reconciliation (or Penance)
5. Anointing of the Sick (or Extreme Unction)
6. Holy Orders
7. Matrimony.



Fig 2.0.1 Illustration of the Seven Sacraments

Top row: Baptism and Confirmation

Middle row: Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

Bottom row: Holy Orders and Matrimony

5. Why are there seven sacraments?

There are seven sacraments because they meet the seven spiritual needs that correspond with the seven bodily needs of our natural life. (CCC 1210)

- a. In our natural life we need first to be born. To this **Baptism** corresponds, by which we are spiritually “born again” as children of God.
- b. Next, we need to grow physically and be strong in order to mature. To this need in our spiritual life corresponds the Sacrament of **Confirmation**, by which we are made spiritually strong and perfect Christians.
- c. Then we need food to eat and nourish our bodies, and to this corresponds the **Eucharist** as the food of our souls.
- d. Of course we also need healing whenever we get sick or wounded. To this necessity corresponds the Sacrament of **Reconciliation**, which heals our souls whenever we get spiritually wounded or sick by sin.
- e. We also need help when we are seriously sick or dying. To this corresponds the sacrament, called **Anointing of the Sick**, which gives our souls special help against the assaults of the devil during our critical illnesses and in our last moments.
- f. In our natural life we also need officers and governors to regulate and maintain order in civil society. To this necessity corresponds **Holy Orders**, which gives us deacons, priests and bishops who rule and govern the things that pertain to our spiritual life.
- g. Finally our natural life requires us to multiply and populate our cities, and to this the Sacrament of **Matrimony** corresponds, by which marriage becomes sacramental and productive of future citizens of our Heavenly City.

6. What is necessary to constitute a sacrament?

To constitute a sacrament, it is necessary to have the *matter*, the *form*, and the *minister*, who must have the intention to do what the Catholic Church does.

7. What is the matter of the sacraments?

The *matter* of the sacraments is the material, sensible thing or *action* used in effecting the sacrament; such as natural water in Baptism, or the imposition of hands in Holy Orders.

8. What is the form of the sacraments?

The *form* of the sacraments is the formula of words which are pronounced in order to effect the sacrament. In Baptism, for example, the minister would say, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” That is the form or formula of the Sacrament of Baptism.

9. Who is the minister of the sacraments?

The *minister* of the sacraments is the person who administers or confers the sacrament. In Baptism, for example, the minister is ordinarily a priest or a deacon.

PRINCIPAL EFFECT OF THE SACRAMENTS: GRACE

10. What is grace?

Grace is an inward and supernatural gift given to us without any merit of our own, but solely through the merits of Jesus Christ, in order to gain eternal life.

11. How is grace distinguished?

Grace is divided into sanctifying grace, which is also called habitual grace, and actual grace.

12. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift inherent in our soul, and rendering us just, adopted children of God and heirs to Heaven.

13. How many kinds of sanctifying grace are there?

Sanctifying grace is of two kinds: first grace and second grace.

14. What is first grace?

First grace is that sanctifying grace by means of which one passes from the state of mortal sin to the state of grace.

15. Which sacraments confer first grace?

The sacraments which confer first sanctifying grace, and change our soul from a state of sin to a state of grace, are two: Baptism and Reconciliation. These two sacraments are, on that account, called **sacraments of the dead**, because they are instituted chiefly to restore the life of grace to a soul that is spiritually dead by sin.

16. What is second grace?

Second grace is that sanctifying grace that confers an *increase* of grace in those who are already in a state of grace.

17. Which are the sacraments that increase grace in those who already possess it?

The sacraments which increase grace in those who already possess it are the other five: Confirmation, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony, all of which confer second grace. These five sacraments are, on that account, called **sacraments of the living**, because those who receive them must be free from mortal sin, that is, they must already be spiritually alive by being in the state of grace.

18. Does a person sin when he, conscious that he is not in a state of grace, receives one of the sacraments of the living?

Yes, he who receives one of the sacraments of the living, while he is conscious that he is not in the state of grace, commits a serious sin of sacrilege. Therefore, it is good practice to go to confession first, and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, before receiving any of these five sacraments: Confirmation, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

19. What is actual grace?

Actual grace is a supernatural gift which enlightens the mind, moves and strengthens the will to enable us to do good and avoid evil.

20. Can we resist the grace of God?

Yes, we can resist the grace of God because grace does not destroy our free will.

21. By the aid of our own powers alone can we do anything to attain everlasting life?

Without the grace of God, and by our own powers alone, we cannot do anything helpful to attain everlasting life.

22. How is grace given us by God?

Sanctifying grace is given us by God chiefly through the sacraments. Actual grace may be obtained through prayer or through the performance of good works, such as the works of mercy.

23. Do the sacraments confer any other grace besides sanctifying grace?

Besides sanctifying grace, the sacraments also confer sacramental grace proper to each sacrament. (CCC 1129)

24. What does sacramental grace do?

Sacramental grace confers the right to receive the actual graces necessary to fulfill the obligations arising from the sacrament received. Thus, when we were baptized we also received the right to receive the actual graces we need to live a Christian life.

25. Do the sacraments always confer grace on those who receive them?

The sacraments always confer grace provided they are received with the necessary and proper dispositions. (CCC 1131)

26. Who gave to the sacraments the power of conferring grace?

Jesus Christ by His passion and death gave to the sacraments the power of conferring grace. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the source of all graces. (CCC 1116) Since the sacraments derive their efficacy from Christ, they confer grace by the fact that they are performed or celebrated, *independently of the righteousness or holiness of the minister* celebrating the sacrament. (CCC 1128, 1584)

27. What sacraments are most necessary for salvation?

The sacraments most necessary for salvation are two: Baptism and Reconciliation. Baptism is necessary to remove original sin, and Reconciliation is necessary to all who have sinned mortally after Baptism. But, while Baptism and Reconciliation are the most necessary for salvation, they are not the greatest.

28. What is the greatest of all the sacraments?

The greatest of all the sacraments is the Eucharist, because it contains not only grace, but also Jesus Christ, the Author of grace and of the sacraments.

THE CHARACTER IMPRESSED BY SOME OF THE SACRAMENTS

29. What sacraments can be received only once?

The sacraments that can be received only once are three: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. These sacraments can be received only once because each of them imprints an *indelible* mark or “seal” on the soul that is never effaced. The character that they imprint on the soul marks us as members of Jesus Christ at Baptism, as His soldiers at Confirmation, and as His ministers at Holy Orders. (CCC 1121)

30. Is it a sin to receive these sacraments more than once?

Yes. It is a mortal sin of sacrilege.

SACRAMENTALS

31. What are the so-called “sacramentals”?

Sacramentals are blessed objects and rituals instituted by the Church for purposes of divine worship. Examples of sacramental objects are blessed rosaries, scapulars, medals, statues, crucifixes, holy water, holy cards, an altar, religious habits and vestments (clothing used by ministers and altar servers), holy candles, incense or any other religious object consecrated for purposes of divine worship. A chapel, a church, a convent, or any building dedicated for purposes of divine worship, is also a sacramental. But sacramentals are not limited to *objects* or *things*, for they also include the *actions* and *rituals* themselves by which a minister invokes the blessing of God upon people and things. For example, the gestures and formula of words used by a minister to bless a rosary, a car, a house, a new-born child, or the remains of the departed, are also sacramentals. (CCC 1667, 1671-1672)



Fig 2.0.2 Sacramentals

32. But why are these blessed objects and rituals called “sacramentals”?

They are so-called because they bear a resemblance to the sacraments in the fact that they are also signs of something sacred.

33. How do sacramentals exactly differ from the sacraments?

First of all, sacramentals are instituted by the Church, while sacraments are instituted by Christ. Secondly, although sacramentals are signs of something sacred, they do not confer divine grace as the sacraments do. The sacraments really confer the grace that they signify. For example, the Sacrament of Baptism is not merely a sign of the cleansing of a soul, but it actually cleanses the soul of the person being baptized, of original and actual sin, if there be any. A sacramental, such as holy water, does not of itself forgive sin, not even venial sin, but it inclines a person to pious acts that lead to the forgiveness of sin. Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas says that, although holy water of itself does not confer grace and wash away sin, the pious *use* of holy water, or the act of devotion and piety that go along with the use of holy water, is enough to forgive venial sin. (CCC 1670)

34. How should we use sacramentals?

We should use sacramentals with faith and devotion, and not treat them like objects of superstition. For instance, we should not wear a crucifix or a medal as if it were a “good luck charm.” (CCC 1676)

LESSON 1 BAPTISM

NATURE AND EFFECTS OF BAPTISM

1. What is the Sacrament of Baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament by which we are freed from sin (original and actual) and incorporated into the Church.

2. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Baptism?

The Sacrament of Baptism confers first sanctifying grace by which original sin is washed away, as well as any actual sin committed before Baptism. It also remits all punishment due on account of such sins; it imprints the indelible character of a Christian; it makes us children of God, members of the Catholic Church and heirs to Paradise, and enables us to receive the other sacraments. Indeed, Baptism is called the first sacrament because we cannot receive any other sacrament before it. (CCC 1213)

3. What is the matter of Baptism?

The **matter** of Baptism is natural water which is poured on the head of the person to be baptized in such a quantity as to flow.

4. What is the form of Baptism?

The **form** or formula of Baptism is: *"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* The whole formula must be pronounced because the Baptism is not valid if the words "I baptize you" or any of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity be omitted.

5. When did Christ give the form of Baptism and the command to baptize?

Before He ascended into Heaven He said, "Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ..." (Matt 28:19).

MINISTER OF BAPTISM

6. To whom does it belong to confer Baptism?

The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishops, priests and, in the Latin Church, also the deacons, but in case of necessity any person, whether man or woman, even a heretic or an infidel, can administer it, provided he performs the rite of Baptism using the correct formula, and has the intention of doing what the Church does in baptizing (CCC 1256).

7. If it were necessary to baptize a person in danger of death, and if several people were present, who should administer the sacrament?

If it were necessary to baptize a person in danger of death, and if several people were present, a priest, if such were at hand, should administer the sacrament, and, in his absence, a deacon; and in the absence of such, “any member of the faithful, indeed any person who has the requisite intention, can and sometimes must administer Baptism” (*Rite of Baptism*, General Introduction, #16).

8. What intention should the person baptizing, have?

The person baptizing should have the intention of doing what the Holy Catholic Church does in baptizing.

THE RITE OF BAPTISM

9. How is Baptism given?

Baptism is given by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized – and if it cannot be poured on the head, then on some other principal part of the body – saying at the same time: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” If the person to be baptized is an infant, then the sponsors, called godfather and/or godmother, usually hold the infant at the baptismal font.

In the Catholic Church Baptism is performed most expressively by triple **immersion** of the candidate in water. However, the ancient practice of simply pouring water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, is also very common. (CCC 1239-1243)



Fig 2.1.1 Infant Baptism

10. If one were to pour the water and another to pronounce the words, would the person be baptized?

If one poured the water and another said the words, the person would not be baptized, because it is necessary that the person who pours the water should pronounce the words.

11. When in doubt whether the person is dead, is it right to omit baptizing him?

When in doubt whether the person is dead, he should be baptized conditionally, saying: "If you are alive I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

12. When should infants be brought to the church to be baptized?

Infants should be brought to the church to be baptized **as soon as possible.**

13. Why such anxiety to have infants receive Baptism?

There should be the greatest anxiety to have infants baptized because, on account of their tender age, they are exposed to many dangers of death. And without the assurance afforded by Baptism, the salvation of the child is entirely up to God's mercy.

14. Do parents sin, then, who, through negligence, allow their children to die without Baptism, or who defer it?

Yes, fathers and mothers who, through negligence, allow their children to die without Baptism may be guilty of grievous sin, because they risk their children to be deprived of eternal life. They may also sin grievously by putting off Baptism for a long time, because they expose them to the risk of dying without having received it. (CCC 1250-1251)

15. When the person who is being baptized is an adult, what dispositions should he have?

An adult who is being baptized, should have, besides faith, true sorrow, even if it be imperfect, for the mortal sins he may have committed. He would not need to go to confession because his mortal sins will be wiped out along with the original sin by the Sacrament of Baptism. However, he needs to have true sorrow for his sins.

16. If an adult in mortal sin was baptized without such sorrow, what would he receive?

If an adult was baptized in mortal sin without such sorrow he would receive the character of Baptism, but not the remission of his sins nor sanctifying grace. And these two effects would be suspended, until the obstacle is removed by perfect contrition or by the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Fig 2.1.2 The Baptism of Christ

The Picture shows Christ being baptized by St. John the Baptist

NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

17. Is Baptism necessary to salvation?

Baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, for our Lord has expressly said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

18. Can the effects of Baptism be supplied in any other way?

The effects of Baptism can be supplied in other ways:

1. By martyrdom, which is called **Baptism of Blood**. This is received by an unbaptized person who dies for the cause of Christianity or for the love of Christ. (CCC 1258)
2. By an act of explicit desire to be baptized and, hence, is called **Baptism of Desire**. This is received by an unbaptized person who has shown an explicit desire to be baptized, such as a catechumen who is preparing for Baptism, but who dies before actually receiving the sacrament. (CCC 1259)
3. By an act of sincere desire to love and serve God, and this is called **Baptism of Implicit Desire**. This is received by those who are ignorant of the Gospel, but who seek the truth and do the will of God according to their understanding of it. It may be presumed that such people would have wanted to be baptized explicitly had they known about it. (CCC1260)
4. By God's mercy. The Catholic Church entrusts the salvation of unbaptized children, or infants who have died without Baptism, to God's mercy. (CCC 1261)

19. If Baptism is necessary to salvation, then why are the effects of Baptism supplied in so many ways other than by Baptism?

Because God can make exceptions to His rule. *"God has bound salvation to the Sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments"* (CCC 1257). This is the reason why the Church recognizes that even unbaptized infants may, through God's boundless mercy, be saved.

20. What obligations does the person baptized have?

The person baptized is obliged (1) to profess the faith and observe the Law of Jesus Christ and of His Church, and (2) to renounce the devil, and his works and pomps¹ forever. The devil craftily allures us by filling our minds with the maxims and ideals of the world that are contrary to the maxims and ideals of the Gospel.

NAMES AND SPONSORS

21. Why is the name of a saint frequently given to him who is being baptized?

To him who is being baptized is frequently given the name of a saint in order to put him under the protection of a heavenly patron and to encourage him to imitate that saint's example.

22. Can infants be baptized when they have no actual faith?

Yes, through the faith of the Church, and of their godparents.

23. Who are the godfathers and godmothers in Baptism?

The godfathers and godmothers in Baptism are those persons who, in accordance with the decree of the Catholic Church, hold the infants at the font, answer for them, and become guarantees in the sight of God for their Catholic education, especially in the absence of the parents. (CIC, can. 872)

24. Are we obliged to keep the promises and renunciations made for us by our sponsors?

We are certainly obliged to observe the promises and renunciations made for us by our sponsors, because it is only on this condition that God has received us into His grace.

¹ The so-called “pomps of the devil” refer to his empty promises by which he seduces us to do evil. Satan gave us an example of this when he offered Christ the glory of the whole world, if He would fall down and adore him. But Christ answered him saying: *The Lord your God shall you adore, and Him only shall you serve.* (Matt 4:8-10).

25. What sort of persons should be chosen as godfathers and godmothers?

The persons who should be chosen as godfathers and godmothers should be practicing Catholics, conscientious of, and obedient to, the laws of God and of the Church.

26. What are the obligations of godfathers and godmothers?

Godfathers and godmothers are bound to see that their spiritual children are instructed in the truths of faith and live as good Catholics, should parents be negligent or be prevented by illness or death to fulfill their duties. (CCC 1255)

LESSON 2 CONFIRMATION

1. What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Confirmation is a sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit, imprints on our souls the mark of a soldier of Jesus Christ, and helps us to become perfect Christians.

2. How does the Sacrament of Confirmation help us to become perfect Christians?

The Sacrament of Confirmation helps us to become perfect Christians by strengthening our faith and increasing the other virtues and gifts received in Baptism.

3. What gifts of the Holy Spirit are increased by Confirmation?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit increased by Confirmation are these seven: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. (Read and review Book One, Art.8, for the definition of these gifts.)

4. When did our Lord institute this sacrament?

The time is not certain. However, we know that this is by divine institution, for St. Paul said, “Now he that confirms us with you in Christ and that has anointed us, is God: Who also has sealed us and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor 1:21-22). And St. Paul himself confirmed twelve disciples after baptizing them: “Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them ...” (Acts 19:5-6).

5. What is the matter of this sacrament?

The **matter** of this sacrament, besides the imposition of hands by the bishop, is the anointing of the forehead with sacred chrism.

6. What is sacred chrism?

Sacred chrism is oil of olive mingled with balsam, and consecrated by the bishop on Holy Thursday. (CCC 1297)

7. What do the oil and balsam in this sacrament signify?

In this sacrament the oil, which is unctuous and strengthening, signifies the abounding grace which is diffused over the soul of the Christian to confirm him in his faith. The balsam, which is fragrant, signifies that the Christian, strengthened by this grace, is enabled to give forth the good odor of Christian virtue.

8. What is the form of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The **form** or formula of the Sacrament of Confirmation is this: "*Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" (CCC 1300, 1320)

9. Who is the minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The ordinary **minister** of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the bishop. A priest may be given the faculty to confer this sacrament, and is then called an *extraordinary minister* of Confirmation. (CCC 1313-1314)

10. How does the bishop administer Confirmation?

In administering the Sacrament of Confirmation the bishop first stretches his hands over those to be confirmed, and invokes the Holy Spirit upon them. Next, he anoints the forehead of each one with sacred chrism in the form of a cross, saying the words of the formula. Then he gives each one confirmed the sign of peace, saying, "Peace be with you." Finally, he solemnly blesses all those he has confirmed. (CCC 1299-1301)

11. Why is the anointing made on the forehead?

It has been suggested that the anointing is made on the forehead, where signs of fear and shame appear, in order that the person confirmed may understand that one should not blush at the name and profession of a Christian, nor fear the enemies of his faith.



Fig 2.2.1 Child being Confirmed by a Bishop

12. Is the Sacrament of Confirmation necessary?

Yes, it is morally necessary for the maturity of our Christian life so that, enriched by the strength of the Holy Spirit, we may act as true witnesses and soldiers of Jesus Christ, spreading and defend the faith by word and deed. (CCC 1285)

13. Should all endeavor to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation then?

Yes, all baptized persons not yet confirmed should endeavor to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and to have those under them receive it. (CCC 1306)

14. Does one sin not to receive it, when one might have it without great inconvenience?

Yes, and it is a mortal sin if it be avoided out of contempt, or omitted out of gross neglect, especially in a place or time of persecution. For, by neglecting to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, we expose ourselves to the great danger of denying our faith, against which this sacrament was especially instituted by our Lord.

15. At what age is the Sacrament of Confirmation recommended to be received?

In the U.S. the Bishops recommend that the age for Confirmation shall be from *the age of discretion* (around seven) to the age of sixteen, because the candidates also need to be properly instructed in the faith. Preparation for Confirmation should strive at awakening Christian maturity in the candidate and a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ. (CCC 1309)

16. What dispositions are required to receive worthily the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation is one of the sacraments of the living. Therefore, to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation worthily it is necessary *to be in the state of grace*, know the

principal mysteries of our faith, have the right intention, and be ready to be a witness to Christ. To be assured of being in the state of grace at the time of confirmation, it is advisable that children go first to confession and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation a few days before receiving Confirmation. (CCC 1310, 1319)

17. Would he who receive Confirmation a second time be guilty of sin?

Yes, he would commit the grievous sin of sacrilege, because Confirmation is one of the sacraments that imprint a character on the soul and hence may be received only once.

18. What should a Christian do to preserve the grace of Confirmation?

To preserve the grace of Confirmation a Christian should pray often, do good works, and live according to the laws of Jesus Christ, in spite of human respect.

19. Why are there also godfathers and godmothers in Confirmation?

In order that, by word and example, they may show the confirmed the way to eternal life and help him in the spiritual combat against the devil. (CIC, can. 892)

20. What qualifications are required in sponsors?

They should be of proper age, Catholics, confirmed, instructed in the necessary truths of religion, and persons of good character. It is desirable that the same person who was the sponsor at the child's Baptism be the sponsor also at the child's Confirmation (CIC, cann. 874.1 and 893.2).

LESSON 3 HOLY EUCHARIST

THE NATURE OF THE EUCHARIST

1. What is the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is a sacrament in which, by the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of bread into the Body of Jesus Christ, and that of wine into His Precious Blood, is contained truly, really, and substantially, the Body, the Blood, the Soul and Divinity of the same Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine as our spiritual food.

2. In the Eucharist is there the same Jesus Christ who is in Heaven, and who was born on earth of the Blessed Virgin?

Yes, in the Eucharist there is truly the same Jesus Christ who is in Heaven, and who was born on earth of the Blessed Virgin.

3. Why do you believe that in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is really present?

I believe that in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is truly present, because He Himself said it, and Holy Catholic Church teaches it. This is what we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew: “While they were at supper, Jesus took bread, blessed, broke, and gave it to His disciples and said, ‘*Take and eat. This is My Body.*’ Taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of this, all of you. For *this is My Blood* of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins’” (Matt 26:26-28). Did you read that well? He did not say, “This is the symbol of My Body,” nor “This represents My Blood.” What He said was, “This IS My Body... This IS My Blood.” In the Gospel of St. John He also made it clear that He was indeed talking of His real Flesh and Blood: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you” (John 6:54).

4. What is the *matter* of the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

The **matter** of the Sacrament of the Eucharist is that which was used by Jesus Christ Himself, that is, **wheat bread** and **grape wine**. (CCC 1412)

A small amount of water is also added in the chalice to signify the fact that blood and water flowed from the side of Christ when He was pierced by a lance (John 19:31-34).



Fig 2.3.1 Hosts made of Wheat Bread in the Bowls and Grape Wine in the Chalice

5. What is the *form* of the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

The essential **form** or formula of the Sacrament of the Eucharist consists of the words used by Jesus Christ Himself: "*This is My Body which will be given up for you ... This is the cup of My Blood...*" The complete formula is actually longer. (CCC 1412)

6. What is the host before consecration?

The host before consecration is just ordinary bread.

7. After consecration what is the Host?

After consecration the Host is the true Body of our Lord Jesus Christ under the sensible appearance of bread, that is, It is now the Body of Christ although It still looks and tastes like bread.

8. What is in the chalice before consecration?

In the chalice before consecration there is wine with a few drops of water.

9. After consecration what is in the chalice?

After consecration there is in the chalice the true Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the sensible appearance of wine, that is, It is now the Blood of Christ although It still looks and tastes like wine.

10. When does the change of the bread into the Body and of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ take place?

The change of the bread into the Body and of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ is made at the very moment in which the priest pronounces the words of consecration during Holy Mass.

11. What is the consecration?

The consecration is the renewal, by means of the priest, of the act of our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, by which He changed bread and wine into His Adorable Body and Blood by saying: "This is My Body ... This is My Blood."

12. What does the Church call this supernatural change of bread and of wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ?

The Catholic Church calls this supernatural change which is daily wrought upon our altars *transubstantiation*. (CCC 1376)



Fig 2.3.2 The Host is the Body of Jesus Christ after the Consecration

13. Who gave this great power to the words of consecration?

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is Almighty God, gave this great power to the words of consecration.

14. Is there nothing left of the bread and of the wine after consecration?

After consecration the species and appearance of the bread and of the wine alone are left.

15. What are the “species” of the bread and of the wine?

By the “species” of the bread and of the wine is meant the quantity and sensible qualities of the bread and of the wine, such as their size, weight, shape, color and taste.

16. How can the species remain while the substance of bread and wine change into the Body and Blood of Christ?

The species of the bread and of the wine remain, while only their substances change by the power of Almighty God.

17. Under the species of the bread is there only the Body of Jesus Christ and under the species of the wine only His Blood?

No. Under the species of bread the **whole** Christ is present, not just His Body. And under the species of wine, the **whole** Christ is present, not just His Blood.

18. Why is Jesus Christ whole and entire both in the Host and in the Wine?

Because there cannot be a living body without a living blood, and vice versa. Both in the Host and in the Wine Jesus Christ is whole and entire, because He is living and immortal in the Eucharist as He is in Heaven. Therefore, where His Body is, there also are His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity; and where His Blood is, there also are His Body, His Soul and His Divinity, all these being inseparable in Jesus Christ. (CCC 1377)

19. When Jesus Christ is in the Host does He cease to be in Heaven?

When Jesus Christ is in the Host He does not cease to be in Heaven. He is physically in Heaven, sacramentally in the Host.

20. Is Jesus Christ present in all the consecrated Hosts in the world?

Yes, Jesus Christ is present in all consecrated Hosts in the world.

21. How can Jesus Christ be present in all the consecrated Hosts in the world?

Jesus Christ is present in all the consecrated Hosts in the world by the Power of God, to whom nothing is impossible.

22. When the Host is broken is the Body of Jesus Christ broken also?

When the Host is broken, the Body of Jesus Christ is not broken, but only the species and sensible appearance of the bread are broken.

23. In which part of the Host is the Body of Jesus Christ present?

The Body of Jesus Christ is wholly present in all the parts and particles of the Host.

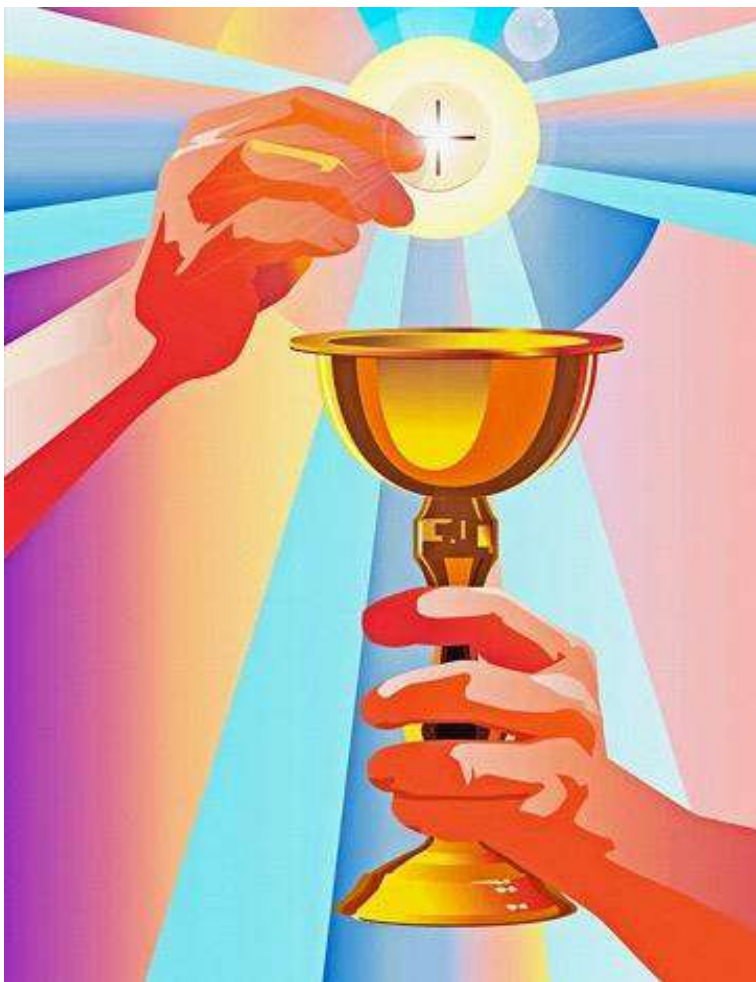


Fig. 2.3.3 Jesus Christ is Present Wholly and Entirely in the Holy Eucharist

24. Is Jesus Christ just as much in a particle of a Host as in a whole Host?

Yes, the same Jesus Christ is just as much in a particle of a Host as in the whole Host.

25. Why is the Most Holy Eucharist preserved in our churches?

The Most Holy Eucharist is preserved in our churches so that It may be adored by the faithful, and brought to the sick when necessary.

26. Ought the Eucharist to be adored?

The Eucharist ought to be adored by all, because it contains really, truly, and substantially, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

27. Who is the ordinary minister of the Holy Eucharist?

The only person who has the power to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is an ordained priest or bishop. However, the ordinary minister for distributing Communion is an ordained bishop, priest, or deacon (CIC, can. 910.1).

28. Who are the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion?

The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are Catholic lay persons who assist in the distribution of Holy Communion, either during the Mass, or afterwards, to sick people at home or in the hospital, or to the aged in nursing homes.

29. Who are the “Eucharistic ministers”?

The term “Eucharistic minister” broadly refers to anyone who distributes Holy Communion. Therefore, it applies to both the ordinary and the extraordinary ministers. If you want to refer exclusively to lay Catholics who assist in distributing Communion, you should use the term “extraordinary minister.”

THE INSTITUTION AND EFFECTS OF THE EUCHARIST

30. When did Jesus Christ institute the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist during His last supper with His Apostles, when He said, “Do this for a commemoration of Me” (Luke 22:19). (CCC 1337-1344)

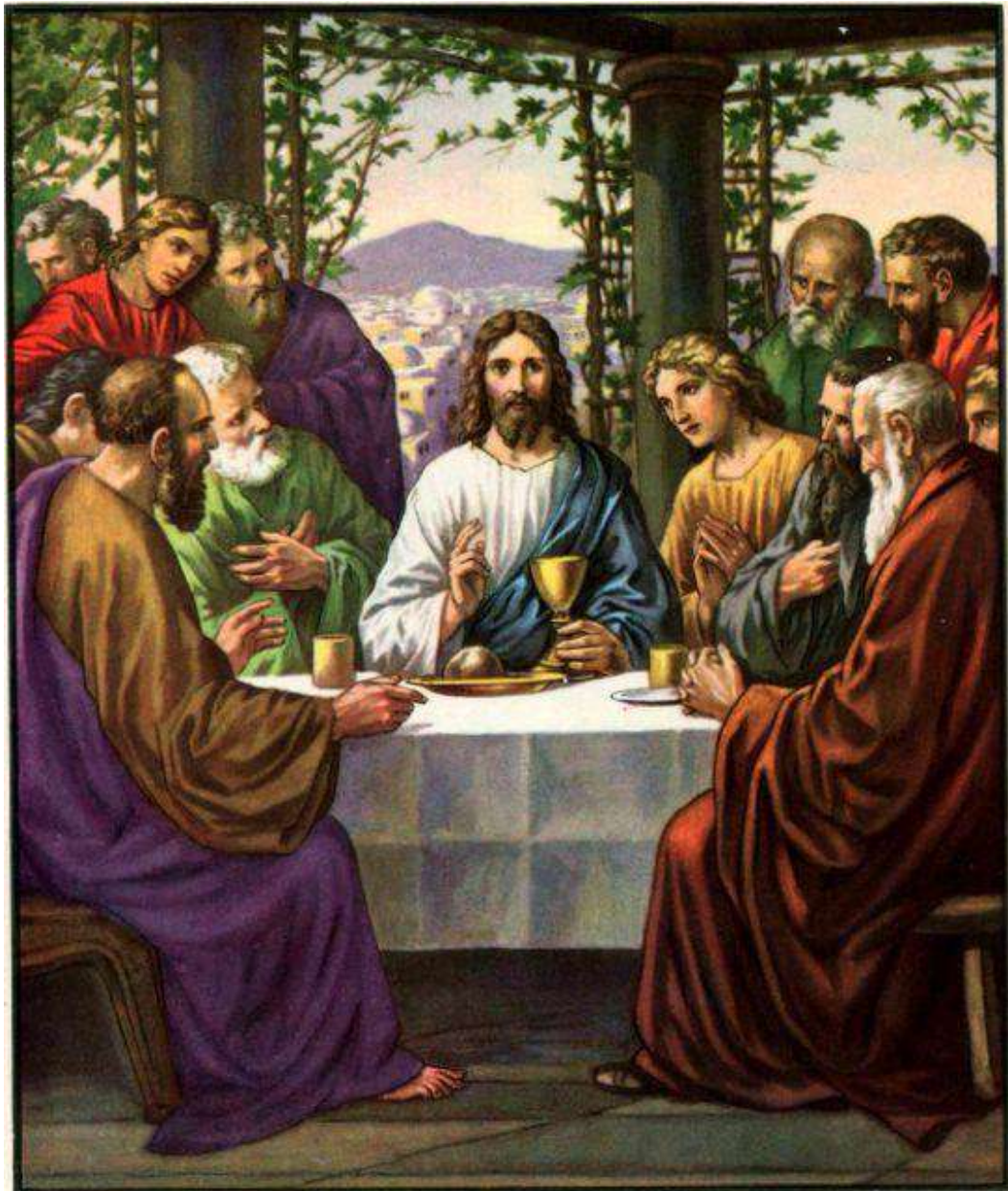


Fig 2.3.4 Christ instituted the Eucharist during His Last Supper with the Apostles

31. Why did Jesus Christ institute the Most Holy Eucharist?

Jesus Christ instituted the Most Holy Eucharist for three principal reasons: (1) To be the Sacrifice of the New Law; (2) To be the food of our souls; (3) To be a perpetual memorial of His passion and death and a precious pledge both of His love for us and of eternal life.

32. Why did Jesus Christ institute this sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine?

Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine, because the Eucharist, since it is intended to be our spiritual nourishment, it was fitting that it should be given to us under the form of food and drink.

33. What are the effects which the Most Holy Eucharist produces in us?

The principal effects which the Most Holy Eucharist produces in those who worthily receive it are these: (1) It increases our union with Christ; (2) It preserves and increases the life of the soul, which is grace, just as natural food sustains and increases the life of the body; (3) It remits venial sins and preserves us from mortal sin; (4) It unites us with all the faithful as one Mystical Body of Christ, the Church (CCC 1391-1396)

34. Does not the Most Holy Eucharist produce other effects in us?

Yes. The Most Holy Eucharist produces four other effects: (1) It weakens our passions; (2) It increases charity toward God and to our neighbor, especially the poor; (3) It promotes unity with other Christians; and (4) It gives us a pledge of future glory and of the resurrection of our body. (CCC 1397-1398, 1402)

DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION WORTHILY

35. Does the Sacrament of the Eucharist always produce its marvelous effects in us?

The Sacrament of the Eucharist produces its marvelous effects in us when it is received with the requisite dispositions.

36. What conditions are necessary to make a good Communion?

To make a good Communion three conditions are necessary:

1. To be in the state of grace;
2. To be fasting one hour before Holy Communion (CIC, can. 919); and
3. To know what we are about to receive, and to approach Holy Communion devoutly. Very young children, as well as those who have not been well instructed in their catechism, and who do not understand that what they receive in Holy Communion is the real Body of Christ, are not yet ready to receive Holy Communion, and should not join the Communion line.

37. What is meant by being in the state of grace?

To be in the state of grace means to have a pure conscience and to be free from mortal sin.

38. Does he who goes to Communion in mortal sin receive Jesus Christ?

He who goes to Communion in mortal sin receives Jesus Christ but not His grace. Also, he commits a sacrilege and renders himself deserving of the sentence of damnation. St. Paul says, “He that eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:29).

39. What should one who knows that he is in mortal sin do before receiving Communion?

One who knows that he is in mortal sin must make a good confession before going to Holy Communion, for even an act of perfect contrition is not enough without confession to enable one who is in mortal sin to receive Holy Communion properly.

If you know that you have a mortal sin, and you have not gone to confession, **STAY IN YOUR SEAT** when Communion time comes, and just make an “Act of Spiritual Communion.” You do not have to join the Communion line just because everybody else is going to Communion. It is better to remain seated than to commit another mortal sin of sacrilege! There are also other valid reasons for not joining the Communion line, such as failure to observe the Eucharistic fast, a bad cough, etc. Don’t think people will judge you if you cannot receive Communion at that time.

The **Act of Spiritual Communion** is said as follows:

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

40. What sort of fast is required before Communion?

Before Communion there is required a one-hour natural fast which is broken by taking food or drink, except water and medicine. Chewing gum in church before Holy Communion breaks the Eucharistic fast and should be avoided. Although the requirement for Eucharistic fast is one hour *before* Communion, it is safer to stop taking food or drink (including chewing gum) one hour *before the Mass begins*, because this gives you a certain margin of error in case you miscalculate the time.

The elderly, the sick, and those who care for them are exempt from fasting and may receive Communion even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour.

41. If one were to swallow a particle that had remained between the teeth, might he still go to Communion?

If one were to swallow a particle that had remained between the teeth, he might still go to Communion because the particle is no longer regarded as food or has lost its character as food.

42. The third condition to make a good Communion is, “To know what we are about to receive.” What does this mean?

“To know what we are about to receive” means to know and firmly believe that what we are about to receive in Holy Communion is NOT ordinary bread nor wine, but the true Body or Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

43. What do the words, “To receive Holy Communion with devotion” mean?

“To receive Holy Communion with devotion” means to approach the sacrament with humility and modesty in person *and dress*; and to make a preparation before, and an act of thanksgiving after, Holy Communion.

44. In what does the preparation before Communion consist?

Preparation before Communion consists in meditating for some time on Whom we are about to receive, and on who we are; and in making acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, adoration, humility, and desire to receive Jesus Christ. Because of the short time available between the consecration and Holy Communion, it is good practice to come a few minutes early and start these preparations before the Mass begins.

45. In what does the thanksgiving after Communion consist?

Thanksgiving after Communion consists in keeping ourselves recollected in order to honor the Lord who is within us; renewing our acts of faith, of hope, of charity, of adoration, of thanksgiving, of offerings, and of requests, especially for those graces which are most necessary for ourselves and for those for whom we are bound to pray. Due to limited time after Communion, it is again good practice not to rush out of church immediately after Mass, but to stay behind a few minutes in church to give thanks to our Lord who so lovingly touched our souls.

46. What should we do during the day on which we have received Communion?

During the day on which we have received Communion we should remain as recollected as possible, occupy ourselves in works of piety, and discharge the duties of our state with greater diligence.

47. How long does Jesus Christ abide within us after Holy Communion?

After Holy Communion Jesus Christ abides within us by His Real Presence until the sacramental species are consumed or absorbed by the body, but He abides within us by His grace as long as we commit no mortal sin.

48. Is it necessary to receive Holy Communion in both species, bread and wine?

No, it is not necessary to receive Holy Communion in both species, since Christ is wholly present in either one. Ordinarily one receives only the consecrated Host; in special occasions (such as weddings) Communion is taken under both species. However, the priest celebrant is required to take Communion under both species always in order to manifest the meaning of the sacrament more fully.

THE WAY TO GO TO COMMUNION

49. Should we kneel or should we stand when receiving Holy Communion?

In the U.S. most people stand in line when they approach the priest or the Eucharistic minister to receive Holy Communion. Therefore, the U.S. Bishops decided that *communicants should remain standing* when they receive the Holy Eucharist.

Traditionally, however, Holy Communion is received on the tongue while kneeling as a form of reverence. This practice is still *recommended*, especially when there are few communicants or when there is no risk of being a tripping hazard to others as one receives Holy Communion.



Fig 2.3.5 Girl Receiving Communion

50. What form of reverence must be shown to the Holy Eucharist when receiving Holy Communion?

First, say your prayer (of adoration) before Holy Communion while still in the pew. Then kneel, if possible, when you receive Communion on the tongue. If you are receiving Holy Communion standing rather than kneeling, show reverence to our Lord by *bowing the head* before the Blessed Sacrament, and by saying “Amen” after the priest or minister says, “The Body of Christ.”



Fig 2.3.6 Boy Receiving Communion

51. Should Holy Communion be received in the hand or on the tongue?

In the U.S. receiving Holy Communion in the hand is *permitted*, but receiving Holy Communion on the tongue has been the traditional practice and is *recommended*.

52. How is Holy Communion received on the tongue?

When receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, open your mouth wide and *extend* your tongue out so the priest or minister can put the Host properly on your tongue. Do not be embarrassed to extend your tongue out. Many saints have done the same.

53. How is Holy Communion received in the hand?

When receiving Holy Communion in the hand and you are right handed, put your right hand under your left. When the priest puts the Host in your hand, pick it up with your right hand and put it in your mouth. If you are left handed, put your left hand under your right. When the priest puts the Host in your hand, pick it up with your left hand and put it in your mouth. Do not walk away with the Host in your hand. You **MUST** first put the sacred Host in your mouth *in the presence of the priest or minister* before walking back to your seat.

54. When should the Sacred Host be swallowed?

We should try to swallow the Sacred Host as soon as possible, and avoid spitting for some time. If the Host should cling to the palate, remove it with your tongue, but never with your finger.

55. What must you do after receiving Holy Communion?

After receiving Holy Communion, you should spend some time adoring our Lord, relishing His Divine Presence, thanking Him and saying your Prayer after Holy Communion. After the Mass and *throughout the day*, think of this great moment when our Lord Jesus came and gave you a “kiss” in your soul.

THE PRECEPT OF HOLY COMMUNION**56. When are we bound to receive Communion?**

The third precept of the Catholic Church requires that we go to Communion during the Easter time (CCC 2042). In the U.S. the Easter duty may be fulfilled from the First Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday. An Act of Spiritual Communion does not fulfill the precept.

57. At what age does the precept of Paschal Communion begin to bind?

The precept of Paschal Communion begins to bind as soon as a child is capable of receiving Communion with the requisite dispositions.

58. Do they sin who are old enough to observe the Easter duty and do not?

They who are old enough to observe the Easter duty and do not, either because they are unwilling, or because, through their own fault, they are not instructed, undoubtedly sin. Their parents or guardians also sin if the delay of Communion is owing to their fault, and they shall have to render a strict account to God for it.

59. Is it a good and useful thing to go to Communion often?

It is an excellent thing to go to Communion often, even daily, provided we do so with the requisite dispositions. In fact, we may receive Holy Communion *again on the same day*, but only at the Mass or celebration of the Eucharist in which we participate (CIC, can. 917). For example, if you attend Mass and receive Holy Communion on Saturday morning, and then you attend Mass for the Saturday evening Mass (to fulfill your Sunday obligation), then you may receive Holy Communion again, even if you already received one in the morning.

60. How long can you receive Holy Communion without first going to confession?

You can receive Holy Communion without going to confession as long as you remain free from mortal sin. However, for those who receive Holy Communion frequently or every Sunday, monthly confession is recommended, even if there are only venial sins to confess.

LESSON 4 RECONCILIATION

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION IN GENERAL

1. What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to remit the sins committed after Baptism.

2. Why is the name “reconciliation” given to this sacrament?

The name “reconciliation” is given to this sacrament because it aims to restore our friendship with God that we have lost by sin.

3. When did Jesus Christ institute the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation on the day of His Resurrection when, entering the Supper Room, He solemnly told His Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John 20:22).

4. What is the matter of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The **matter** of the Sacrament of Reconciliation consists of the sins committed by the penitent after Baptism, and the acts of the penitent himself, that is, *contrition*, *confession* and *satisfaction*.

Contrition or sorrow for sin is a grief of the soul leading us to detest sins committed and to resolve not to commit them anymore. (CCC 1451)

Confession is the disclosure of our sins to the priest, and consists in accusing ourselves of the sins we have committed in order to obtain absolution and receive penance for them. (CCC 1455-1456)

Satisfaction or penance is the reparation of damage caused by sin, which may include prayer or good work, which the confessor enjoins on the penitent in expiation of his sins. (CCC 1459-1460)

5. What is the form of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The **form** of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the formula of absolution spoken by the priest in remitting sin: *"I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* See CCC 1449 for the complete formula.

6. Who is the minister of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The **minister** of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the bishop, or a priest authorized by the bishop to hear confessions. (CCC 1461-1462)

7. Why do you say that a priest must be authorized by the bishop?

A priest must be authorized by the bishop to hear confessions because to administer this sacrament validly the power of Orders is not enough. The power of jurisdiction, that is, the power to judge, must also be given by the bishop.

8. Of all the parts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation which is the most necessary?

Of all the parts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation the most necessary is contrition, because without it no pardon for sins is obtainable, while with it alone, pardon can be obtained, provided that along with it there is at least an implicit desire of going to confession.



Fig 2.4.1 Confession

EFFECTS AND NECESSITY OF RECONCILIATION

9. Which are the effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation confers sanctifying grace, restores our friendship with God, remits mortal sins, as well as venial sins which we confess and are sorry for. It changes eternal punishment into temporal punishment, and remits temporal punishment more or less according to our dispositions. It reconciles us with the Church and re-establishes our communion with the saints that has been damaged by sin. Reconciliation also gives the soul aid in due time against falling into sin again, and it restores peace of conscience. (CCC 1468-1469)

10. Is the Sacrament of Reconciliation necessary to all for salvation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is necessary for salvation to all who have committed a mortal sin after Baptism.

11. Is it a good thing to go to confession often?

Yes, it is an excellent thing to go to confession often even if there are only venial sins to confess, because the Sacrament of Reconciliation, besides taking away sin, also gives the graces necessary to avoid sin in the future. For those who receive Holy Communion every Sunday, monthly confession is highly recommended. For those who are conscious of having committed a mortal sin, confession is necessary before Communion, and is therefore recommended to be done at the soonest possible time.

12. Has the Sacrament of Reconciliation the power of remitting all sins, no matter how numerous or how great they are?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has the power of remitting all sins no matter how numerous and great they are, provided it is received with the requisite dispositions.

13. How many conditions are necessary to make a good confession?

To make a good confession five things are necessary:

1. Examination of conscience;
2. Sorrow for having offended God;
3. A resolution of sinning no more;
4. Confession of sins; and
5. Satisfaction or penance.

14. What should we do first of all to make a good confession?

To make a good confession we should first of all earnestly beseech God to give us the light to know all our sins and the strength of will to detest them.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

15. What is the examination of conscience?

The examination of conscience is a diligent soulful search for the sins committed since the last good confession. We should examine our conscience not only with respect to the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church, but also in the light of the Word of God, such as Matt 5-7 and Rom 12-15. (CCC 1454)

16. How is the examination of conscience made?

The examination of conscience is made by carefully calling to mind before God all the sins committed but not confessed, in thought, word, deed and omission, against the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church, the Beatitudes and other maxims of the Gospel.

17. On what else should we examine ourselves?

We should also examine ourselves on our bad habits and on the occasions of sin.

18. What is required for a sin to be mortal?

For a sin to be mortal three things are required:

1. Grave matter,
2. Full knowledge, and
3. Perfect consent of the will.

The matter is grave when the thing under examination is seriously contrary to the laws of God and His Church.

There is full knowledge in sinning when we know perfectly well that what we are doing is a serious evil.

There is perfect consent of the will in sinning when we deliberately determine to do a thing although we fully know that thing to be sinful.

19. What diligence should be used in the examination of conscience?

In the examination of conscience, the same diligence is to be applied as in any matter of great importance.

20. How much time should be spent in the examination of conscience?

More or less time should be spent in the examination of conscience according to the needs of each case, that is, according to the number and kind of sins that burden the conscience and according to the time that has elapsed since the last good confession.

21. How may the examination of conscience be rendered easy?

The examination of conscience is rendered easy by making an examination of conscience *every evening* upon the actions of the day.

SORROW FOR SIN

22. What is sorrow for sin?

Sorrow for sin consists in grief of soul and in a sincere detestation of the offence made against God.

23. How many kinds of sorrow are there?

Sorrow is of two kinds: perfect sorrow and imperfect sorrow.

24. What is perfect sorrow?

Perfect sorrow, also known as *contrition*, is a grief of soul that arises from having broken our relationship with God who is infinitely good and worthy of being loved for His own sake.

25. Why is perfect sorrow or contrition called perfect?

Perfect sorrow or contrition is called perfect for two reasons: (1) Because it considers the goodness of God alone and not the loss of Heaven or the pains of hell; (2) Because it enables us at once to obtain pardon for sins, even though the obligation to confess them still remains. (CCC 1452)

26. Perfect sorrow, then, obtains us pardon of our sins independently of confession?

Perfect sorrow or contrition does not obtain us pardon of our sins independently of confession because it always includes the intention to confess them. However, perfect sorrow can obtain pardon and restore us to grace at once because it proceeds from charity which cannot exist in the soul together with sin.

27. What is imperfect sorrow?

Imperfect sorrow, also known as *attrition*, is that by which we repent of having offended God, not because He is infinitely good and deserving of our love, but for fear of hell or the punishment deserved in this life or in the life to come, or because of the very foulness of sin itself. (CCC 1453)

28. What qualities must sorrow have to be true sorrow?

In order to be true, sorrow must have four qualities: It must be *internal, supernatural, supreme* and *universal*. True sorrow, be it perfect or imperfect, must have these four qualities:

Internal – that means, it must exist in the heart and will, and not in words alone.

Supernatural – that means, it must be excited in us by supernatural motives that come from faith, rather than purely natural and human motives. For example, if we are sorry for the sin of stealing only because we were caught committing it, and we fear going to jail or suffering temporal penalties that would be imposed by the law, then our motive is purely natural and human. But if we are sorry because we believe on faith that stealing is against one of God's commandments, and that by stealing we lose sanctifying grace and our friendship with God, and that we deserve the fires of hell, then our motive comes from our faith and is supernatural.

Supreme – that means, it must move us to hate sin as the greatest of all evils, being as it is an offence against God. For our sorrow to be supreme, it is not necessary to shed tears of sorrow, but in our heart we must regard having broken our relationship with God as worse than any other misfortune whatsoever.

Universal – that means, it must extend to *every* mortal and venial sin committed. He who has four mortal sins but is sorry for only three of them still remains an enemy to God.

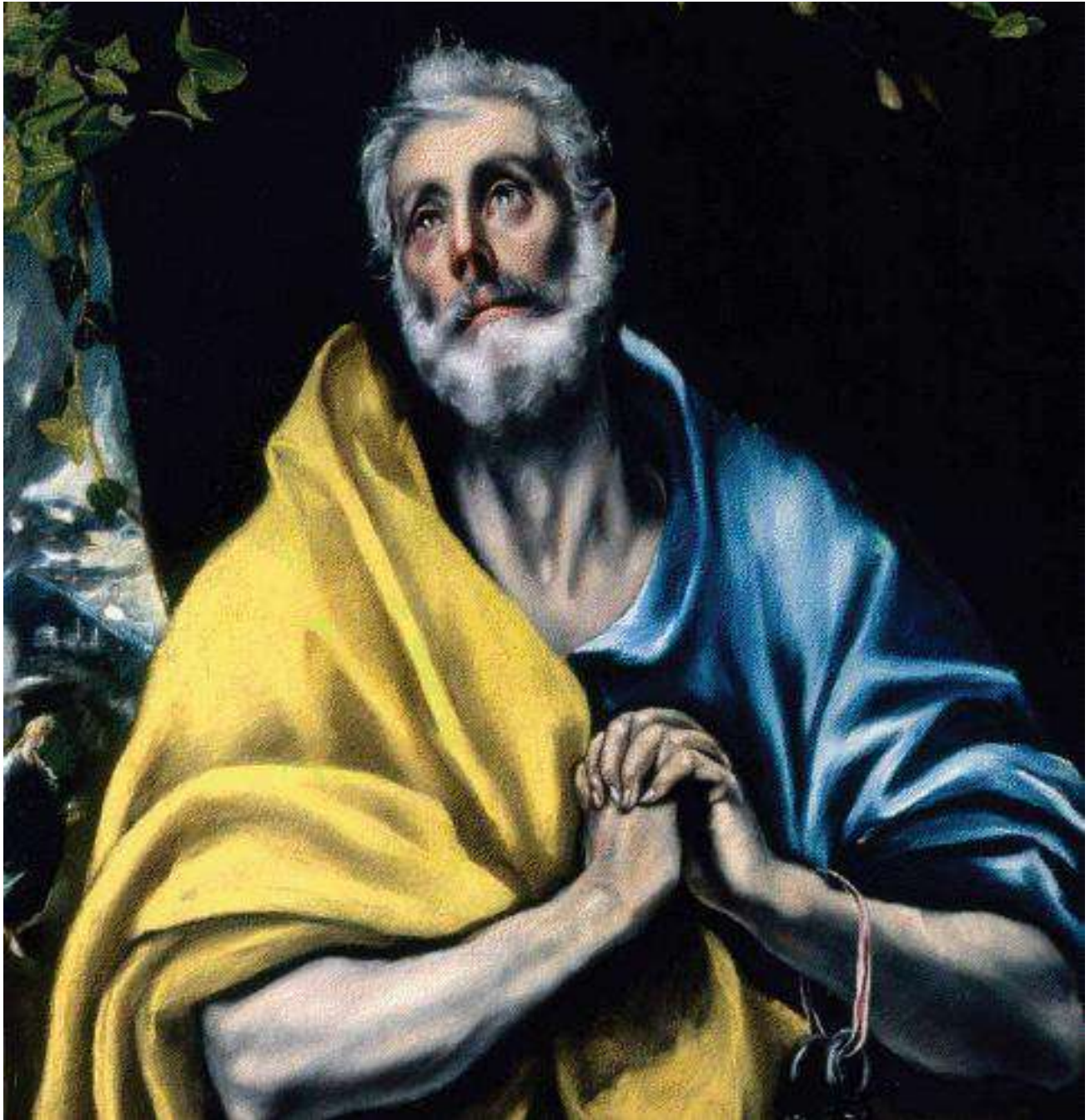


Fig 2.4.2 The Sorrow of St. Peter
for denying Christ three times (John 18:13-27)

29. What should we do to have true sorrow for our sins?

To have true sorrow for our sins we should ask God to grant us the grace of true sorrow, and to excite it in ourselves by thinking how great was the evil we have done by sinning.

30. In going to confession should we be extremely solicitous to have a true sorrow for our sins?

In going to confession we should certainly be very solicitous to have a true sorrow for our sins, because if sorrow is lacking the confession is no good.

31. If one has only venial sins to confess, must he be sorry for all of them?

He must repent of all that he remembers having committed. It is not necessary to confess all his venial sins, but it would be sacrilegious to deliberately not repent of any of those sins that he remembers. Some have recommended that if one has only venial sins to confess, one may confess some grave sin of the past, indicating that it has already been confessed, in order to increase sorrow and secure the confession of only venial sins. This has been recommended by some, but is not required.

32. If a man in mortal sin is dying and no priest is available to hear his confession, can his sins still be forgiven?

Yes, provided he makes an act of perfect contrition.

33. Is it well to make an act of contrition often?

It is well and most useful to make an act of contrition often, especially before going to sleep or when we know we have or fear we have fallen into mortal sin, in order to recover God's grace as soon as possible. Also, the practice of making an examination of conscience, followed by an act of perfect contrition, every night will make it easier for us to obtain from God the grace of making a good confession at the time of our greatest need, that is, when in danger of death.

RESOLUTION OF SINNING NO MORE

34. In what does a good resolution consist?

A good resolution consists in a determined will not to commit sin for the future and to use all necessary means to avoid it. To be good, a resolution should have three principal conditions: It ought to be *absolute*, *universal*, and *efficacious*.

An **absolute** resolution is one that is done without any restrictions of time, place or person.

A **universal** resolution is one that aims to avoid all mortal sins, both those already committed as well as those which we can possibly commit.

An **efficacious** resolution is one in which there is a determined will to lose everything rather than commit another sin; to avoid the dangerous occasions of sin; and to stamp out our bad habits.

35. What is meant by a bad habit and how do we correct them?

By a bad habit is meant an acquired disposition by which we fall easily into those sins to which we have become accustomed. To correct bad habits, we must watch over ourselves, pray much, go often to confession, have one good spiritual director, and put into practice the counsels and remedies which he gives us.

36. What is meant by dangerous occasions of sin?

By dangerous occasions of sin are meant all those circumstances of time, place, person, or things, which, of their very nature or because of our frailty, lead us to commit sin. We are strictly bound to shun them. A person who has a difficulty avoiding a certain occasion of sin should tell the matter to his confessor and follow his advice.

CONFESSION

37. Having prepared properly for confession by an examination of conscience, by exciting sorrow, and by forming a good resolution, what do you do next?

Having prepared properly for confession by an examination of conscience, by sorrow, and by a firm purpose of amendment, I will go to make an accusation of my sins to the priest in order to get absolution.

38. Can't I confess my sins directly to God?

You can, but that would not be a sacramental confession. If you confess your sins directly to God, you do not know whether God gave you an absolution because you do not hear His voice. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation you actually hear the priest who, in God's name, gives you pardon for your sins.

39. Is not the confession of sins to a priest only a recent invention of the Catholic Church?

No. It is an ancient practice that dates back to the time of the Apostles. St. James writes in his epistle: "Confess therefore your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be saved" (Jas 5:16). Then in the *Acts of the Apostles* it is written, "Many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds" (Acts 19:18).

40. Does confession do any special good or comfort to our souls?

Yes, confession brings great comfort to souls burdened with guilt and remorse. Just as the disclosure of secret griefs to a friend bring peace, the disclosure of sins to God in the person of the priest gives a great feeling of peace and relief.

41. What sins are we bound to confess?

We are bound to confess all our mortal sins; it is well, however, to confess our venial sins also. (CCC 1458)

42. Which are the qualities confession ought to have?

The principal qualities which confession ought to have are five: It ought to be *humble, sincere, prudent, brief* and *entire*.

Humble means that the confession must be done without arrogance, pride or boasting, but with the feelings of one who is guilty, and who is begging for forgiveness.

Sincere means that the confession must reveal sins as they are, without excusing them, lessening them, or exaggerating them.

Prudent means that the confession must use the most careful words, and avoid revealing the sins of others.

Brief means that the confession must be short and should avoid saying anything useless or unnecessary for the purpose of confession.

Entire means that all mortal sins that we are conscious of having committed since our last good confession must be made known, together with the circumstances and number. The circumstances need to be confessed because they can change the nature and gravity of the sin, such as those circumstances that change a sinful action from being venial sin to one that is mortal, or those that makes a sinful action equivalent to two or more mortal sins. Here are some examples:

1. A boy tells a lie to avoid being punished by the school, but his lie made his classmate look bad and got in trouble instead. He must reveal this fact in confession. It is not enough to say, "I told a lie to avoid being punished." He must also say that his lie got his classmate in trouble. To be fair, he must confess his lie, not just to the priest during confession, but also to the school principal, in order to save his classmate

from getting an undeserved punishment from the school that his lie caused.

2. That the confession ought to be short, means that we should say nothing that is useless or unnecessary for the purpose of confession.
 3. A man steals a sacred object, say a chalice, from the church. In this case it is not enough to say, "I stole a drinking cup from the church." He must also say that the cup was a chalice, a sacred object used to hold the Blood of Christ at Mass. Stealing this chalice is not just an act of theft, but also an act of sacrilege. His act was therefore a double sin.
- 43. If a penitent is not certain of having committed a sin, must he confess it?**

If a penitent is not certain of having committed a sin, then he is not bound to confess it; and if he does confess it, he should add that he is not certain of having committed it.

- 44. What should he do who does not remember the exact number of his sins?**

He who does not distinctly remember the number of his sins must mention the number as nearly as he can.

- 45. Does he who through forgetfulness does not confess a mortal sin, or a necessary circumstance, make a good confession?**

He who through pure forgetfulness does not confess a mortal sin, or a necessary circumstance, makes a good confession, provided he has been duly diligent in trying to remember it. However, if a mortal sin forgotten in confession is afterwards remembered, we are still bound to confess it the next time we go to confession.

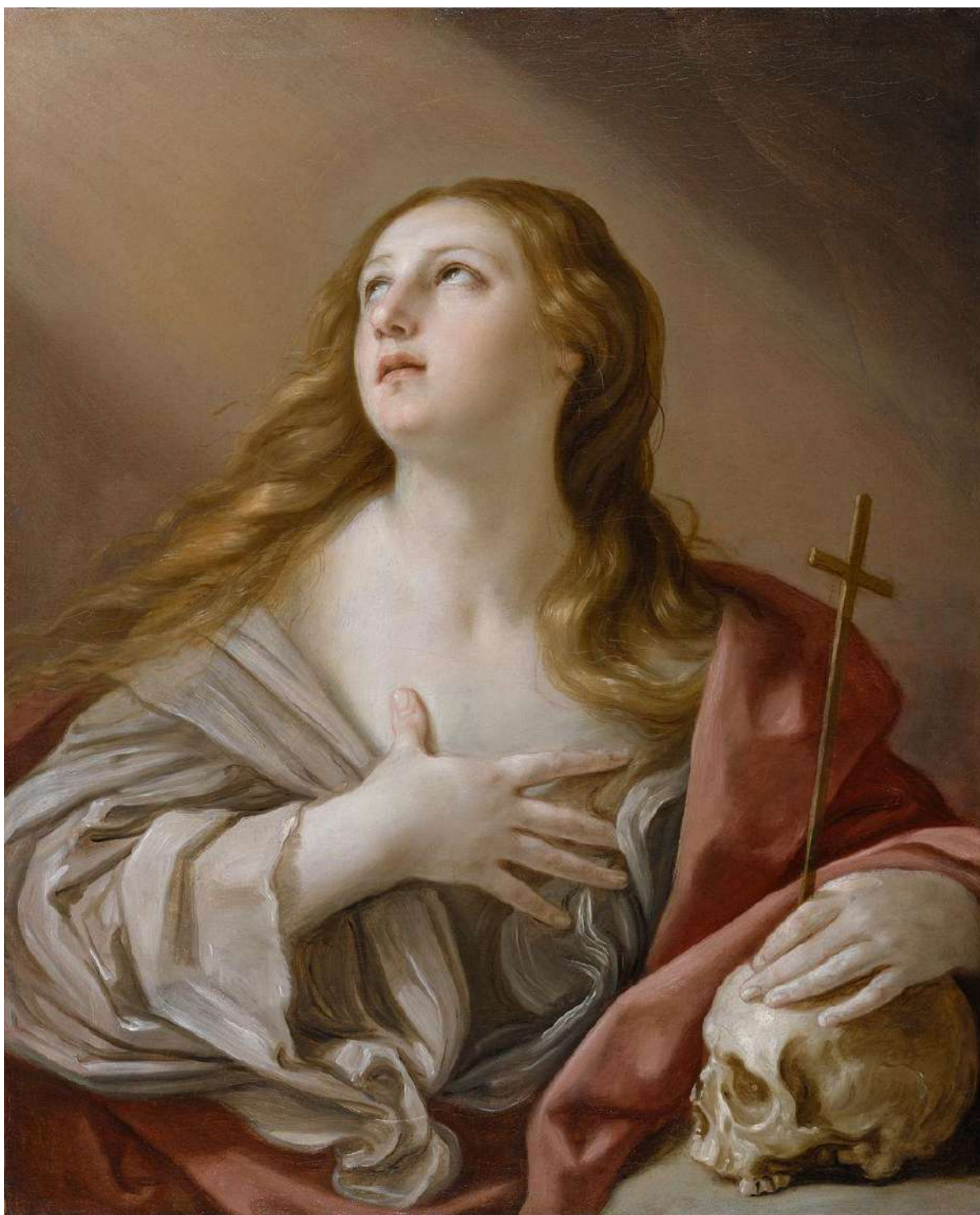


Fig 2.4.3 The Penitent Magdalene

46. What does he commit who, through shame or some other motive, willfully hides a mortal sin in confession?

He who, through shame or some other motive, willfully hides a mortal sin in confession, profanes the sacrament and is consequently guilty of *sacrilege*. None of his sins are forgiven, and he just added one more mortal sin in his soul. The next time that he goes to confession, he must reveal to his confessor that he made a bad confession, what sin he concealed, in how many past confessions he has concealed it, and confess again *all the sins he previously confessed since his last good confession*.

47. What reflection should a penitent make who is tempted to conceal a sin in confession?

He who is tempted to conceal a mortal sin in confession should reflect: (1) That he was not ashamed to sin, in the presence of God who sees all; (2) That it is better to manifest his sin secretly to the confessor than to live tormented by sin, die an unhappy death, and be covered with shame before the whole world on the day of general judgment; (3) That the confessor is bound by the seal of confession, even if it costs him his life. By the **seal of confession** the priest is bound to keep everything he hears in confession secret under pain of excommunication (CIC, cann. 983.1, 1388.1). In fact, even a layman, who overhears someone's confession, is also bound to secrecy with strict penalties not excluding excommunication (CIC, cann. 983.2, 1388.2).

48. Is it not a heavy burden to be obliged to confess one's sins to a priest, especially when these are shameful sins?

Although it may be a heavy burden to confess one's sins to a priest, still it must be done, because it is of divine precept, and because pardon can be obtained in no other way. Besides, we should be confident that whatever we reveal in confession will remain hidden because we know that the priest, who hears our confession, is bound by the seal of confession to keep everything he hears in confession secret. (CCC 1467)

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

49. How do you make a good confession?

These are the simple steps for making a good confession:

1. Kneel at the confessional and say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." Then, as the priest gives his blessing make the sign of the cross. If the priest omits the blessing, proceed to step #2.
2. Then say: "I made my last good confession _____ weeks ago. Since then I have committed the following sins."
3. Say all your sins humbly, sincerely, prudently, briefly and entirely, making sure that you mention also the number and relevant circumstances of your sins.
4. When you have finished, say: "For these and for all the sins of my past life, I am truly sorry, Father."

50. Having thus finished your confession, what remains to be done?

Having finished your confession, listen respectfully to what the confessor says, accept the penance with a sincere intention of performing it; and, while he gives you the absolution, say your Act of Contrition. Sometimes, the priest waits to hear you say and finish your Act of Contrition before giving the absolution. When he is finished, you simply say, "Amen." The priest may also say, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good." Your response would be, "His mercy endures forever."

51. Having received absolution what remains to be done?

Having received absolution leave the confessional, thank God for a good confession, perform your penance as soon as possible, and put into practice the advice given to you by the confessor.

52. Must confessors always give absolution to those who go to confession to them?

Confessors should give absolution to those only whom they judge are properly disposed to receive it.

53. May confessors sometimes defer or refuse absolution?

Confessors not only may, but must defer or refuse absolution in certain cases so as not to profane the sacrament. For example, confessors may refuse absolution to the following penitents:

1. Those who refuse to learn the principal mysteries of their faith, or who neglect to learn their catechism;
2. Those who are gravely negligent in examining their conscience, or who show no signs of sorrow or repentance;
3. Those who are able but not willing to return or to make up for the goods they have damaged or stolen;
4. Those who are unwilling to restore the reputations of those whose good name they have injured;
5. Those who do not from their heart forgive their enemies;
6. Those who refuse to correct their bad habits;
7. Those who will not avoid bad places, bad shows, bad friends, and other occasions of sin that endanger their souls.

54. Is not a confessor too severe, who defers absolution because he does not believe the penitent is well enough disposed?

A confessor who defers absolution because he does not believe the penitent well enough disposed, is not too severe. On the contrary, he is being charitable and acts as a good physician who tries all remedies to save the patient from harming himself by a sacrilegious confession.

55. Should the sinner to whom absolution is deferred or refused, despair or leave off going to confession altogether?

A sinner to whom absolution is deferred or refused, should not despair or leave off going to confession altogether. On the contrary, he should humble himself, acknowledge his deplorable state, profit by the good advice his confessor gives him, and thus put himself as soon as possible in a state deserving of absolution.

56. Is the Sacrament of Reconciliation always held privately through individual confession and absolution?

Although the Sacrament of Reconciliation is ordinarily done privately through individual confession and absolution, a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation with general confession and general absolution may be permitted in case of grave necessity. However, only the diocesan bishop may decide whether or not the conditions of grave necessity exist for general absolution to be granted. The mere fact that there is a large gathering of the faithful, as in a feast or a pilgrimage, does not constitute grave necessity. (CCC 1484)

57. What case example can you give showing grave necessity?

In case of war, for example, where many will be exposed to the danger of death, but there is not enough priests nor enough time to hear every penitent's individual confession, a general absolution may be allowed. For the absolution to be valid, however, each penitent must still have the intention of individually confessing their sins to a priest at the soonest opportunity. (CCC 1483)

SATISFACTION OR PENANCE

58. What is satisfaction?

Satisfaction, which is also called sacramental penance, is one of the acts of the penitent by which he makes a certain reparation to the justice of God for his sins, by performing the works the confessor imposes on him. For example, if the penitent has stolen something, the confessor might ask him, in addition to doing some prayers, to return the good that he had stolen. That work – prayers and returning the stolen goods – is his penance or satisfaction. The penitent is bound to accept the penance imposed on him by the confessor if he can perform it; and if he cannot, he should humbly say so, and ask some other penance. (CCC 1460)

59. When should the penance be performed?

If the confessor has fixed no time, the penance should be performed as soon as convenient, and as far as possible while in the state of grace.

60. How should the penance be performed?

The penance should be performed entirely and devoutly.

61. Why is a penance imposed in confession?

A penance is imposed because, after sacramental absolution which remits sin and its eternal punishment, there generally remains a temporal punishment to be undergone, either in this world or in purgatory.

62. Why has our Lord willed to remit all the punishment due to sin in the Sacrament of Baptism but not in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

It has been suggested that our Lord has willed to remit all the punishment due to sin in the Sacrament of Baptism but not in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because the sins after Baptism are much more grievous, being committed with fuller knowledge and greater ingratitude for God's benefits, and also in order that the obligation of satisfying for them may restrain us from falling into sin again.

63. Can we of ourselves make satisfaction to God?

Of ourselves we cannot make satisfaction to God, but we can do so by uniting ourselves to Jesus Christ, who alone gives value to our actions by the merits of His passion and death.

64. Does the penance which the confessor imposes always suffice to discharge the punishment which remains due to our sins?

The penance which the confessor imposes does not ordinarily suffice to discharge the punishment remaining due to our sins; and hence we must try to supply it by other voluntary penances.

65. Which are the works of penance?

The works of penance may be reduced to three kinds: prayer, fasting or mortification, and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy (visiting the sick, teaching the ignorant, etc.). Self-flagellation and other excessive bodily mortifications should not be done without consulting your priest or spiritual director.



Fig 2.4.4 Flagellants

66. Which penance is the more meritorious, that which the confessor gives, or that which we do of our own choice?

The penance which the confessor imposes is the most meritorious, because being part of the sacrament it receives greater virtue from the merits of the passion of Jesus Christ.

67. Do those who die after having received absolution but before they have fully satisfied the justice of God, go straight to Heaven?

No, they go to purgatory to satisfy the justice of God and to be perfectly purified.

68. Can the souls in purgatory be relieved of their pains by us?

Yes, the souls in purgatory can be helped by our prayers, by all our good works, by indulgences, but above all by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

69. Besides his penance, what else must the penitent do after confession?

Besides performing his penance after confession, the penitent, if he has justly injured another in his goods or reputation, or if he has given him scandal, must as soon as possible, and as far as he is able, restore him his goods, repair his honor or good name, and remedy the scandal.

70. How can the scandal given be remedied?

The scandal given can be remedied by removing the occasion of it and by edifying those whom we have scandalized by word and good example.

71. How should we make satisfaction to one whom we have offended?

We should make satisfaction to one whom we have offended by asking his pardon, or by some other suitable reparation.

LESSON 5 ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1. What is the Anointing of the Sick?

The Anointing of the Sick (formerly called “Extreme Unction”) is a sacrament instituted for the spiritual as well as for the temporal comfort of those who are seriously sick, or those who are in danger of death. (CCC 1511, 1514)

2. When did Jesus Christ institute this sacrament?

The time is uncertain, but some think that Christ instituted it between His Resurrection and Ascension. We know at least that the “Anointing of the Sick” was administered during the Apostolic times because St. James said in his epistle: “Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man. And the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him” (Jas 5:14-15).

3. What is the *matter* of this sacrament?

The *matter* of the sacrament, called “Anointing of the Sick,” is the laying on of hands and the anointing of the forehead and hands with oil blessed by a bishop.

4. What is the *form* of this sacrament?

The *form* of this sacrament is the words spoken by the priest as he anoints with blessed oil the forehead and the hands of the sick person: “*Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.*” (CCC 1513)

5. Who is the minister of this sacrament?

The minister of this sacrament is a priest. (CCC 1516)

6. What are the effects of the Anointing of the Sick?

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick produces the following effects: (1) It increases sanctifying grace; (2) It remits venial sins, and also mortal sins which the sick person, if contrite, is unable to confess; (3) It gives strength to bear illness patiently, to withstand temptation and to die holily; (4) It unites one more closely to Christ's passion and to contribute to the good of the Church; (5) It aids in restoring the health of the body if it is for the good of the soul; and (6) It prepares the soul for its final journey to Heaven. (CCC 1520-1523, 1532)



Fig 2.5.1 Anointing of the Sick

7. When should Anointing of the Sick be received?

The anointing of the sick should be received when the illness is dangerous and, if possible, after the sick person has received the

Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. It is even well to receive it while the patient still has the use of his senses, and has some hope of recovery.

Incidentally, Communion given to the sick in danger of death is called **Holy Viaticum** (from the Latin word *via*, which means way), because it supports them on their way from this life to eternity. (CCC 1524)

8. Why is it well to receive the Anointing of the Sick when the sick person has still the use of his senses, and has some hope of recovery?

It is well to receive the Anointing of the Sick while the sick person retains the use of his senses, and while there remains some hope of recovery because:

- 1.) He thus receives it with better dispositions, and is hence able to derive greater benefit from it;
- 2.) This sacrament restores health of body (should it be for the good of the soul) by assisting the healing powers of nature. Hence, it should not be deferred until recovery is despaired of.

9. With what dispositions should the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick be received?

The principal dispositions for receiving Anointing of the Sick are: To be in the state of grace; to have confidence in the power of this sacrament and in the mercy of God, and to be resigned to the will of the Lord.

10. What should be the sick person's feelings on seeing the priest?

On seeing the priest, the sick person should feel thankful to God for having sent him; and should gladly receive the comforts of religion, which, if he is able, he should request himself.

LESSON 6 HOLY ORDERS

1. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the Church continues the mission entrusted by Christ to the Apostles, by giving power to exercise the duties connected with the worship of God and the salvation of souls, and which imprints the character of minister of God on the soul of him who receives it. (CCC 1536)

2. Why is it called Orders?

It is called Orders because it comprises various grades, the one subordinate to the other, from which the sacred hierarchy is composed. The highest grade is the episcopate, which contains the fullness of the priesthood; then comes the priesthood; then the diaconate. Integration to each grade is accomplished by a rite known as *ordination*. (CCC 1537)

3. When did Jesus Christ institute the Sacerdotal Order?

Jesus Christ instituted the Sacerdotal Order at the Last Supper when he conferred on the Apostles and their successors the power of consecrating the Holy Eucharist. Then on the day of His Resurrection, He conferred on them the power of remitting and retaining sin, thus constituting them the first priests of the New Law in all the fullness of their power.

4. What is the *matter* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

The *matter* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is the imposition of the bishop's hands on the recipient, which is a sign indicative of the grace conferred by this sacrament. (CCC 1597)

5. What is the *form* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

The *form* of Holy Orders is the prescribed prayers that accompany the imposition of the bishop's hands, and which give meaning to the matter or the imposition of hands. The prayers are different for the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons (CCC 1586 -1588).



Fig 2.6.1 Ordination to the Priesthood

6. Who is the minister of this sacrament?

The bishop is the minister of this sacrament. (CCC 1576) The bishop ordinarily ordains priests and deacons in his own diocese. However, he may ordain clergy in another diocese with the diocesan bishop's permission. Also, only a bishop can consecrate another bishop, but not without papal approval (CIC can. 1013).

7. What are the effects of Holy Orders?

Holy Orders gives bishops the spiritual power to ordain other bishops, priests and deacons, and it gives priests the power to consecrate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, to administer the sacraments, and to preach in the name of the Church. It also creates an indelible mark on the soul of the recipient, thus marking him a minister of God. (CCC 1581-1583)

8. How do you know that the ordination of bishops and priests is not a recent Church invention and that it was practiced by the Apostles?

One evidence is St. Paul, who gave this advice to Timothy, the first bishop of Ephesus: “Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood” (1 Tim 4:14). Then to Titus, first bishop of Crete, he also writes: “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that you might set in order the things that are wanting and ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed you” (Titus 1:5). (CCC 1590)

9. Is the dignity of the Catholic priesthood a great dignity?

The dignity of the Catholic priesthood is great indeed, because of the two-fold power which Jesus Christ has conferred upon it — that over His real Body and that over His Mystical Body, the Church; and because of the divine mission committed to priests to lead men to eternal life.

10. Is the Catholic priesthood necessary in the Church?

The Catholic priesthood is necessary in the Church, because without it the faithful would be deprived of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and of the greater part of the sacraments. They also would have no one to instruct them in the faith, and they would be as sheep without a shepherd, a prey to wolves. In short, the Church, such as Christ instituted it, would no longer exist.

11. Is it a sin to despise priests?

It is a very grave sin, because the scorn and insults cast on priests fall upon Jesus Christ Himself, who said to His Apostles, “He who despises you, despises Me” (Luke 10:16). However, it is not a sin to expose the activities of a pastor who covers up a sinful lifestyle under the cloak of sacred ministry.

12. Is it lawful for priests to marry?

No, because there is a Church precept against it, which comes to us by tradition from the Apostles. God’s service requires total dedication and an undivided heart. Even the Apostles did not stay with their wives after they were called to the ministry. (CCC 1579)

13. Is it lawful for women to be priests?

No, because it is clear from Christ’s actions that He wanted an all-male priesthood. If our Lord did not mind having female priests, then why did He select only male Apostles? Why did He not even call His own mother, the Virgin Mary, to the ministry? From the beginning of the Church and through the centuries, the Church never changed her tradition of ordaining only men to the priesthood. For the priest often has to act *in the person of Christ*, especially in celebrating the Eucharist. How appropriate do you think is it for a female priest to consecrate the host and say, in the person of Christ, “This is *My Body*?”

Also, every priest is a sign of Christ because the priest sacramentally represents Christ. Now, just as the sacramental sign of Baptism is lost when liquid other than water is used, so the sacramental sign of the priesthood is lost when someone other than a male person is ordained because Christ, whom the priest represents, became incarnate as male. (CCC 1548)

14. What motive should he have who embraces the ecclesiastical state?

The motive of one who embraces the ecclesiastical state should be the glory of God and the salvation of souls alone.

15. What is necessary to enter the ecclesiastical state?

To enter the ecclesiastical state a divine vocation is necessary before all else. To find out if God calls us to the ecclesiastical state we should: (1) Fervently pray to the Lord to make known His will to us; (2) Consult our bishop or a learned and prudent director; (3) Diligently examine whether we have the capacity necessary for the studies, the duties, and the obligations of this state, which includes a life of celibacy. (CCC 1578-1579)

16. If one were to enter the ecclesiastical state without a divine vocation would he do wrong?

If one were to enter the ecclesiastical state without a divine vocation, he would commit a great wrong and run the risk of being lost.

17. Do those parents sin who, from worldly motives, impel their sons to embrace the ecclesiastical state without any vocation?

Those parents who, for worldly motives, impel their sons to embrace the ecclesiastical state without any vocation commit a very grave sin, because by thus acting they usurp the right God has reserved to Himself alone of choosing His own ministers; and they expose their children to the danger of eternal damnation.

18. Which are the duties of the faithful toward those who are called to Holy Orders?

The faithful should: (1) Give their children and dependents full liberty to follow the call of God; (2) Pray God to grant good pastors and zealous ministers to His service; (3) Have special respect for all who are consecrated by Holy Orders to God's service.

LESSON 7 MATRIMONY

NATURE OF MATRIMONY

1. What is the Sacrament of Matrimony?

Matrimony is a sacrament, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, which creates a holy and indissoluble union between a man and woman, which gives them the grace to produce and raise their children as Christians (first aim of marriage), and to love each other holily (second aim of marriage).

2. So, marriage has two aims?

Yes. The primary aim of marriage is the procreation and education of children. The secondary aim is the mutual love and comfort of man and wife. (CCC 1601)

3. Can man be married to man, and woman to woman?

No, because the primary aim of marriage is to produce and raise children for God. Although we often hear of “same-sex marriage,” especially among gays and lesbians, the truth is that the marriage of two people of the same sex is not capable of naturally producing children and, for that reason, fails to meet the primary aim and purpose of marriage. A true marriage is always between one man and one woman. If same-sex marriage is not even a natural and true marriage in the eyes of God, much less can it be a sacrament. That some States legalize this practice is unfortunate, because it betrays an ignorance of the primary aim of marriage.

4. Does the Sacrament of Matrimony have any special signification?

The Sacrament of Matrimony signifies the indissoluble union of Jesus Christ with the Church, which is His Spouse and our Holy Mother.

5. By whom was Matrimony instituted?

Matrimony was instituted by God Himself in the Garden of Paradise (Gen 1:27-28; 2:21-24), and was raised to the dignity of a sacrament by Jesus Christ (Matt 19:6).

6. Why do we say that the bond of marriage is indissoluble?

We say that the bond of marriage is indissoluble or that it cannot be dissolved except by the death of either husband or wife, because God so ordained it from the beginning and our Lord Jesus Christ solemnly proclaimed it. (CCC 1614)

7. Can the contract be separated from the sacrament in Christian marriage?

No, in marriage among Christians the contract cannot be separated from the sacrament, because, for Christians, marriage is nothing else than the natural contract itself, raised by Jesus Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. For this reason, every true marriage among Christians, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, is also a sacrament. For Catholics, however, some requirements must be met before the marriage can be regarded as true or valid (See Q. 17 below).

8. What is the *matter* of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The *matter* of Matrimony is the external *exchange of promises* by which man and woman bind each other to the indissoluble union of marriage. This verbal exchange of promises is the sensible sign of the grace conferred by this sacrament.

9. What is the *form* of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The *form* of Matrimony is the *mutual consent* of the man and woman to the words exchanged during the ceremony. “I take you to be my wife...”; “I take you to be my husband...” The external words themselves are just the *matter* of the sacrament, but the mutual consent of the parties to these words is the *form* that constitutes the covenant of sacramental marriage. (CCC 1626)

10. What effects does the Sacrament of Matrimony produce?

The Sacrament of Matrimony: (1) Gives an increase of sanctifying grace; (2) Gives a special sacramental grace for the responsible discharge of all the duties of the married state.



Fig 2.7.1 Sacrament of Matrimony

MINISTER – RIGHT DISPOSITIONS

11. Who are the ministers of this sacrament?

In the Latin Church the ministers of this sacrament are not the priest, but the **couple themselves**, who together confer the sacrament to each other normally during Holy Mass. (CCC 1623)

12. How is this sacrament administered?

In the Latin rite this sacrament is administered by the contracting parties themselves who declare, in the presence of the priest and of two witnesses, that they take each other in marriage.

13. What use, then, is the blessing which the parish priest gives to the married couple?

The blessing which the parish priest gives to the married couple is not necessary to constitute the sacrament, but it is given to sanction their union in the name of the Church and to invoke on them more abundantly the blessing of God. (CCC 1630)

14. What intention should those have who contract marriage?

Those who contract marriage should have the intention: (1) Of doing the will of God, who calls them to that state; (2) Of working out in that state the salvation of their souls; (3) Of bringing up their children as Christians, if God should bless them with any.

15. How should those about to be married prepare themselves to receive this sacrament fruitfully?

In order to receive this sacrament fruitfully, those about to be married should: (1) Earnestly recommend themselves to God, so as to know His will and obtain the graces necessary for that state; (2) Consult their parents before making any promise, because obedience and the respect due to them demand this; (3) Prepare themselves by a good confession, or, if necessary, a general confession of their whole life; (4) Avoid all dangerous familiarity in word or act while in each other's company. (CCC 1622)

16. Which are the principal obligations of married persons?

Married persons should: (1) Guard inviolably their conjugal fidelity and behave always and in all things as Christians; (2) Love one another, bear patiently with one another, and live in peace and concord; (3) Think seriously of providing for their children, if they have any, according to their needs; raising them up as Christians, and leave them free to choose the state of life to which they are called by God. (CCC 1652-1654)



Fig 2.7.2 Betrothal of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph

CONDITIONS AND IMPEDIMENTS

17. What is necessary to contract a Catholic marriage validly?

To contract a Catholic marriage validly it is necessary to be free from every diriment impediment to marriage; and to give consent freely to the marriage contract in the presence of the parish priest (or a priest delegated by him) and of two witnesses.

18. What is necessary to contract marriage lawfully?

To contract marriage lawfully it is necessary to be free from every diriment impediment to marriage; to be instructed in the principal truths of religion; and, finally, to be in a state of grace; otherwise a sacrilege would be committed.

19. What are impediments to marriage?

Impediments to marriage are certain circumstances which render marriage either invalid or unlawful. The former are called *diriment impediments* and the latter *prohibitory impediments*.

Diriment (or invalidating) impediments render a marriage invalid. Examples of invalidating impediments (CIC, cann. 1083-1107):

1. **Lack of age.** The minimum age for valid marriage is determined by the Bishops Conference of each country. In the U.S. the minimum age is 16 for a man, 14 for a woman.
2. **Antecedent and perpetual impotence** (permanent inability to perform the sexual act). However, neither a doubt about impotence nor sterility (inability to have a child) is an impediment to marriage.
3. **An existing marriage** that has not been annulled.
4. **Disparity of worship**, that is, when one party is baptized and the other is not (Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, infidels, etc.)
5. **Holy Orders**, and irrevocable **solemn vows** of chastity in a religious institute.
6. **Lack of free matrimonial consent** due to coercion, fear, ignorance, mental incapacity, psychological immaturity, etc.

7. **Blood relationship** to any degree in the direct line (natural or legitimate), and to the fourth degree in the collateral line.

Prohibitory impediments render the marriage *unlawful*, but not invalid. Examples are: a simple vow of chastity; mixed religion (or marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian); marriage at forbidden times (Lent and Advent). Actually, a marriage can be done at any time of the year. What is not permitted during Lent and Advent is a pompous wedding or a Nuptial Mass which is not in keeping with the spirit of the season.

20. Are the faithful obliged to make known to Church authority impediments of which they have knowledge?

The faithful are obliged to make known to Church authority impediments of which they have knowledge. For this reason, the names of those who intend to get married are published in the church.

21. Who has the power to regulate impediments to marriage, to dispense from them, and to judge of the validity of Catholic marriage?

The Church alone has the power to place and regulate impediments to marriage, to judge of the validity of marriage among Catholics and to dispense from the impediments which she has placed.

22. Why has the Church alone power to place and regulate impediments and to judge of the validity of marriage?

The Church alone has power to place and regulate impediments, to judge of the validity of marriage, and to dispense from the impediments which she has placed, because the contract, being inseparable from the sacrament in a Christian marriage, also comes under the power of the Church, to which alone Jesus Christ gave the right to make laws and give decisions in sacred things.

23. Can the civil authority dissolve the bonds of Christian marriage by divorce?

No, the bond of Christian marriage cannot be dissolved by the civil authority, because the civil authority cannot validly interfere with the matter of the sacrament nor can it put asunder what God has joined together. A civil divorce does not dissolve a Christian marriage, and those who remarry civilly after getting a civil divorce would not be truly married before the sight of God and, should they live together, would be guilty of adultery. (CCC 1650)

24. What is a civil marriage?

It is nothing but a mere formality prescribed by the civil law to give and insure the civil effects of the marriage to the spouses and their children.

25. Is it sufficient for a Christian to get only the civil marriage or contract?

For a Christian, it is NOT sufficient to get only the civil contract, because it is not a sacrament, and therefore not a true marriage. Spouses who would live together united by only a civil marriage would be in a habitual state of mortal sin, and their union would always be illegitimate in the sight of God and of the Church.

26. Should those who marry in church also get a civil marriage?

Civil marriage should also be performed because, though it is not a sacrament, it provides the spouses and their children with the civil effects of conjugal society. For this reason, the Church as a general rule allows the sacramental marriage only after the formalities prescribed by the civil authorities have been accomplished. In many countries, however, especially English speaking countries, the civil authority acknowledges the religious marriage in the church and gives it the same value as civil marriage; thus there is no need of a separate ceremony. However, the states may add certain requirements and formalities which should be observed.

Picture Credits / Sources

Fig 2 Portrait of Jesus Christ

Artist: Heinrich Hofmann (1824-1911)

Source for the Portrait:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christ,_by_Heinrich_Hofmann.jpg

Extracted from the Painting “Christ and the Rich Young Ruler”

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hoffman-ChristAndTheRichYoungRuler.jpg>

Fig 2.0.1 Illustration of the Seven Sacraments (circa turn of 19th/20th century)

Top row: Baptism and Confirmation

Middle row: Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

Bottom row: Holy Orders and Matrimony

Artist: Anonymous.

Source: Dr. Fischer Kunstauktionen, Slovene Ethnographic Museum

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinterglasbild_Die_Sieben_Sakramente_Slowenien.jpg

Fig 2.0.2 Sacramentals

Note: The site has a Pinterest button, indicating that the image may be shared for non-commercial use.

<https://shop.catholicsupply.com/blog/What-are-Sacramentals-and-how-can-we-use-them>

Fig 2.1.1 Infant Baptism

Free photo by HollyGirl18 from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/photos/baptism-catholic-baby-religion-644267/>

Fig 2.1.2 The Baptism of Christ

Artist: Paolo Veronese (1523-1588)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Veronese_-_Baptism_of_Christ,_circa_1583-1584.jpg

Fig 2.2.1 Child being Confirmed by a Bishop

Artist: Giuseppe Crespi (1665-1747)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giuseppe_Maria_Crespi_-_Confirmation_-_WGA05765.jpg

Fig 2.3.1 Hosts made of Wheat Bread in the Bowls and Grape Wine in the Chalice

Free Photo by Adamy Gianinni (Seutec Studio) from Pixabay.com.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/church-communion-cat-eucharist-5011686/>

Fig 2.3.2 The Host is the Body of Jesus Christ after the Consecration

<https://publicdomainvectors.org/en/free-clipart/Illustration-of-Holy-Eucharist-symbol/33225.html>

Fig. 2.3.3 Jesus Christ is Present Wholly and Entirely in the Holy Eucharist

Free Illustration by Annalise Batista from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/holy-communion-catholic-eucharist-4784984/>

Fig 2.3.4 Christ instituted the Eucharist during His Last Supper with the Apostles

Source: Archive.org.

<https://ia803006.us.archive.org/7/items/OldBiblePicturesSmaller/A6E1CBBB-2236-4C0C-A4F0-2AC2A5453AD1.jpeg>

Fig 2.3.5 Girl Receiving Communion

Courtesy of Jeanne Boleyn, 2009

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tatiana_Communion2.jpg

Fig 2.3.6 Boy Receiving Communion

Free picture by Herney Gómez from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/photos/first-communion-rite-religion-2925469/>

Fig 2.4.1 Confession

Artist: Giuseppe Molteni (1800-1867)

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Artgate_Fondazione_Caripio_-_Molteni_Giuseppe,_La_confessione.jpg

Fig 2.4.2 The Sorrow of St. Peter

Artist: El Greco (1541-1614)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_Greco_-_Las_lágrimas_de_San_Pedro.jpg

Fig 2.4.3 The Penitent Magdalene

Artist: Guido Reni (1575-1642)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Guido_Reni_-_The_Penitent_Magdalene_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Fig 2.4.4 Flagellants (PD)

Illustration from the Nuremberg Chronicle, by Harmann Schedel (1440-1514)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_Flagellants_\(CCXVr\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_Flagellants_(CCXVr).jpg)

Fig 2.5.1 Anointing of the Sick

Artist: Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:L%27Extrême_onction_I,_vers_1640,_Grantham,_Belvoir_Castle.jpg

Fig 2.6.1 Ordination to the Priesthood

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Holy_Orders_Picture.jpg

Fig 2.7.1 Sacrament of Matrimony

The store has a Pinterest button, indicating that images may be shared for non-commercial use.

<https://www.catholicfaithstore.com/daily-bread/the-catholic-view-on-marriage-and-the-sacrament-of-matrimony/>

Fig 2.7.2 Betrothal of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph

Artist: Sebestyén Stettner (1699-1758)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Betrothal_of_Virgin_Mary_and_St_Joseph,_1743.jpg